(c) whether initially the oil marketing companies could source funds required for purchase of new cylinders from large sums of security deposits by existing LPG customers and later replenish the same with fresh security deposits from new customers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA J. PATEL): (a) to (c) Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) have been asked not to stop the release of new LPG connections. New LPG connections are to be made available as soon as possible and in any case, within a period of sixty days. At present, new LPG connections are available for genuine domestic customers and as on 01.10.2008, there are 1030.4 lakh LPG customers in the country, covering 53% of households as per 2001 Census. OMCs have reported that they have released 20.06 lakh new LPG connections in the country during the period April-September, 2008.

The amount of security deposit to be collected from the customers is based on the procurement cost of the cylinders and is collected once the new connection is released. The amount of security deposit is revised from time to time by the OMCs to take care of the increase in the procurement cost of the cylinders.

TAPI pipeline project

419. SHRI M.V. MYSURA REDDY: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the reaction of Government on the media reports that India is not inclined to push through Iran-Pakistan-India (IPI) gas pipeline project but is very keen on Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) pipeline;

(b) whether it is a fact that recently he held bilateral talks with Pakistan on TAPI pipeline; and

(c) whether it is also a fact that China is eagerly waiting to grab IPI pipeline in view of India not showing keen interest in this pipeline project?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA J. PATEL): (a) In order to enhance the energy security for the country, Government is pursuing the import of natural gas from Iran through IPI gas pipeline project and from Turkmenistan through TAPI gas pipeline project.

(b) 2nd Technical Working Group (TWG) meeting and 10th Steering Committee Meeting (SCM) of the Project was held at Islamabad on April 21-22, 2008 and April 23-24, 2008 respectively. Subsequently, the 3rd and 4th meetings of TWG were held in Asghabat, Turkmenistan on May 29-31, 2008 and September 3-5, 2008, respectively at Ashgabat, Turkmenistan. These meetings were attended by representatives from all participating countries, including India.

(c) No official communication has been received in this regard.

Exclusive Natural Gas Grid in Andhra Pradesh

420. SHRI NANDI YELLAIAH: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that an exclusive Natural Gas Grid would be set up by Government in Andhra Pradesh for the benefit of industries and for providing gas at a cheaper rate for domestic consumption;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) if not, whether Government would assure of setting up the same at the earliest; and

(d) if not, the reasons for not assuring in setting up such exclusive Natural Gas Grid in Andhra Pradesh?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA J. PATEL): (a) to (d) Gas pipelines are laid according to gas availability and connect production and consumption centers. A network of trunk gas pipelines is being laid by various entities connecting customers in the country, including Andhra Pradesh, to various sources of natural gas.

Currently GAIL (India) Limited has 728 km. long pipeline network in Andhra Pradesh. Reliance Gas Transportation Infrastructure Limited (RGTIL) is constructing Kakinada-Hyderabad-Uran-Ahmedabad pipeline, which would *inter-alia* connect parts of Andhra Pradesh to the KG-D6 field of Reliance Industries Limited (RIL). The pipeline is under commissioning. It passes through East Godavari, West Godavari, Krishna, Khammam, Nalgonda, Rangareddy districts of Andhra Pradesh. The length of the pipeline in Andhra Pradesh is 562 km. In addition to this, RGTIL has been granted authorization for Kakinada-Basudebpur-Howrah pipeline, Vijaywada-Nellore-Chennai pipeline and Chennai-Bangalore-Mangalore pipeline; these pipelines would also connect parts of Andhra Pradesh to the KG-D6 field. The length of these pipelines in Andhra Pradesh is around 410 km., 400 km. and 114 km. respectively.

Exploration of CBM in Gujarat

421. SHRI KANJIBHAI PATEL:
SHRI NATUJI HALAJI THAKOR:
SHRI VIJAYKUMAR RUPANI:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to refer to answer to Unstarred Question 1190 given in the Rajya Sabha on the 11th March, 2008 and state:

(a) whether ONGC has inducted a third partner for exploration of CBM block;

(b) whether smaller rig has been planned for drilling core holes to reduce the costs;

(c) if so, whether ONGC has completed Minimum Work Programme (MWP); and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA J. PATEL): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Smaller rigs were inducted from M/s. Mineral Exploration Corporation Ltd., (MECL), a Government of India enterprise, to drill cover holes to reduce costs. However, as they were unable to drill due to adverse geological conditions, a higher capacity rig was hired.